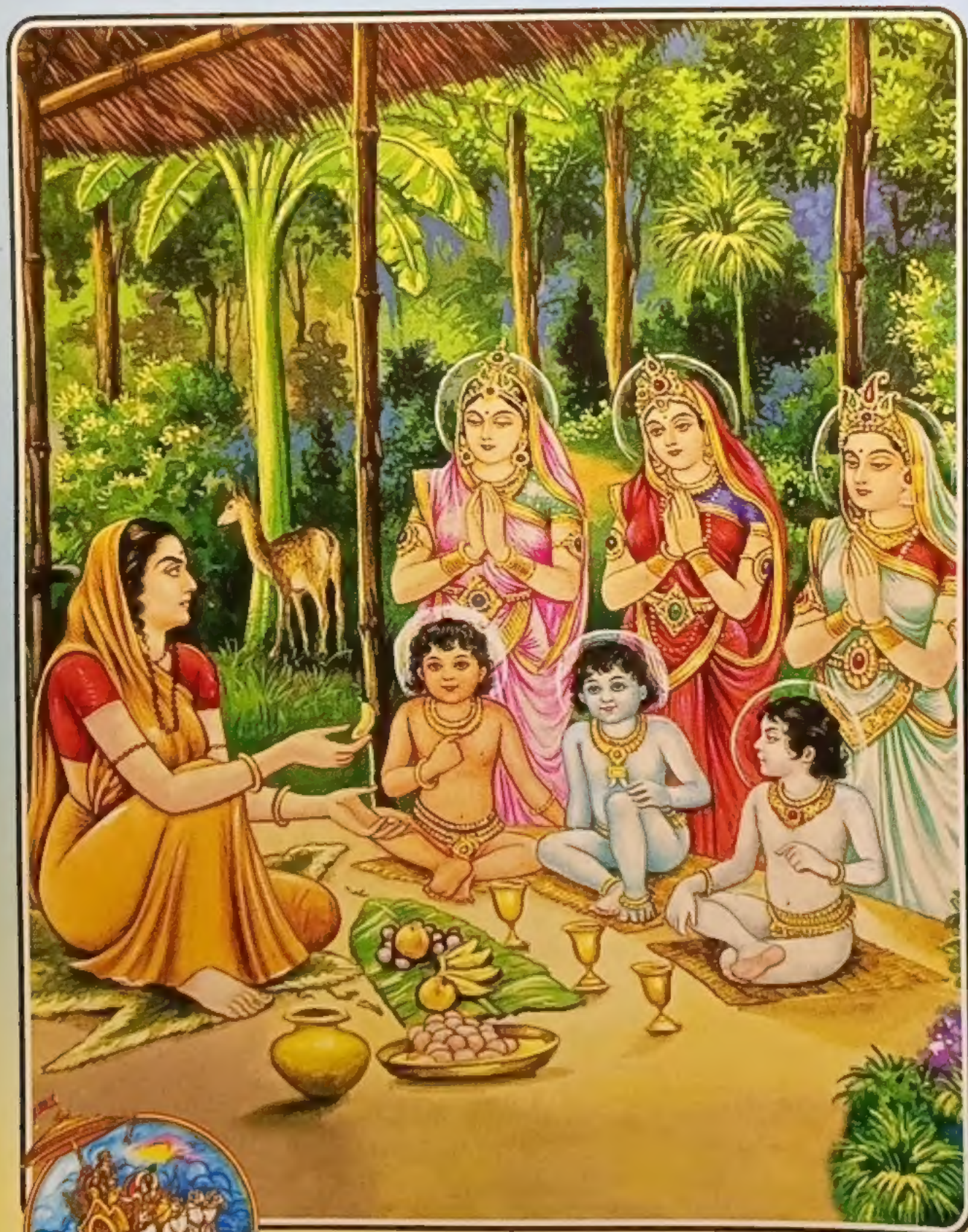


Ideal Women



Ideal Women

tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
tvameva bandhushcha sakha tvameva
tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mama devadeva

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Publisher's Note

Indian culture and its excellent ideals are always to be practised and are ever conducive to blessedness. Not only the God-realised men but great women too, of our country have also illumined the world with their excellent ethics and ideal characters. Thus, the character of these revered are always adorable. They are pillar of the light for women folks and so also guides for them.

This book contains the ideal character of four such great women – **Sitaji, Kunti, Draupadi and Gandhari**. Here these characters have been described by revered late Shri Jaydayal Goyandka. A few years back, these characters were published in Hindi separately In different editions of 'Kalyana' which were widely accepted and appreciated. Keeping in mind the utility and convenience, now English version of all these characters are being published in one book titled as '**Ideal Women**'.

Written in simple language, the stories teach and impart knowledge, abdication, devotion, dedication, love, spiritual and moral conduct and moreover faith in Supreme Power.

Though this book is useful for all but especially mothers, sisters and girls will be more benefited. These are not simply stories to read only but to be imbibed and followed on each and every steps in our practical life. By doing so, each and every family, home will become a place of pleasure like heaven.

It is our sincere request to the noble readers that they should read and should also stimulate others to read and follow.

Publisher

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Ideal Women

Morals from the character of Sitaji

It will not be an exaggeration to quote the character of Janakiji, the beloved wife of Lord Ram and mother of the universe as the supermost character. Among all the female characters of Ramayan, the character of Sitaji is the best, the most ideal and emulative at every step. The character of Sitaji is a true guide for the maidens of India to tread on the pious Path. Her character is an ideal teacher in true sense to lead the Indian women towards the piousty. All the virtues like extraordinary marital fidelity, sacrifice, sublimity, fearlessness, tranquility and peace, forgiveness, tolerance, meekness, self-control, righteousness, service to other's, courage, boldness etc., altogether found in Sitaji, can be rarely traced anywhere in any other woman of the universe. It is not only difficult but assuredly impossible to find such an example like Sitaji's pious life and her unique fidelity to her husband in not only in Ramayan but anywhere in any history or legacy of the universe. From beginning to the end, all the instances of Sitaji's life barring or except a single instance, are pious and ideal. There is nothing in her life devoid of giving moral lesson to our mothers and sisters. Sitaji can be considered as the superior most devotee of her husband among the women in the history of the world. If critically examined, the character of any exceptional character, even of any high moral and virtuous woman may have some blot that is not deserving to be followed. But the character of Sitaji is unblemished and it is impossible to

trace even a single blot in her character which is not suitable to be emulated.

On one occasion, when Lord Ram departs to hunt an illusory deer and Sitaji hears the pathetic cry of dying Marich, O! Sita!, O! Lakshman, She being perplexed, blames Lakshman—‘I feel that you want to see your elder brother dead with the intention to make me your own. because of your avarice to obtain me, you are not going to protect your brother.’ Later on Sitaji repented very much for this ill-treatment. For the common character of a woman, such a bahaviour of Sitaji is not considered to be of much blemish. Sitaji here crossed the limit of morality due to supreme devotion to her husband and intense impatience, suspecting her husband’s life in peril. The incarnation of Shri Ram-Sita was to maintain the propriety in the society. That is why, this was considered a blame to Sitaji and this is the reason why Sitaji had repented for it.

Loving Behaviour in Parental Home

In Janakpur, her parental home, Sitaji had very affectionate dealings with all. All including elders and younger and all the male and females loved Sitaji from the core and corner of their heart. From the very childhood Sitaji was modest and shy by nature. Shyness and modesty is the ornament of women. She used to bow to the feet of her parents daily. Even the servants and maids of the house were always much pleased with her sweet behaviour. Some instances of her affectionate behaviour at the time of her farewell to her father-in-law's house, are worth seeing and it is marked by the description of that time.


Then recovering themselves all queens called their daughters and embraced them again and again. They escorted them to some distance and then embraced them once more, the love on both sides swelled to a great extent. While meeting their daughters again and again, they were parted by the companions of princesses even as a cow who has just calved may be parted from its calf.

Being overpowered with love, male and female, friends including the residents of the palace; it seemed as if the entire town of Janakpur has become full of pathos, anguish and lamentation of separation.

Janakiji had reared the parrots and starlings (mynah) and taught them the lesson in cage of gold. They were restless and asking for Sitaji where she was. Thus, all the birds and deers became disconcerted so much, then how it is possible to describe the feelings of human beings? In the meantime Janakji with his brother came there. His eyes

were full of tears being overwhelmed with deep love. Though he was considered to be a man of supreme dispassion then seeing Sitaji, he even was unable to control himself and lost his patience, embraced Janakiji to his bosom and the great embankment of dispassionate wisdom toppled down.


Now the readers may imagine the intensity of love where even Janakji, renowned pillar of wisdom and the spirited precept teacher of great scholars, crosses the limit of his knowledge and even the animals, birds and pets of the cages become restless calling 'Sita! Sita!!' What a deep love and attachment exists with Sita! All the women should learn the lesson from the character of Sitaji that at her paternal house a woman should deal with everyone, either elder or younger, rich or poor, in such a way as is liked and appreciated by all.



Obedience To her parents

Sitaji never missed to obey the instructions or orders of her parents. She strictly followed the teachings given by her parents. While departing at the time of farewell from Mithila and in Chitrakoot, whatever Sitaji has learnt, from her parents, is worth following by the women all and sundry.

May you be ever remain beloved of your husband! This is our blessing to you. May you live long with him. Serve the mother-in-laws and father-in-law and the preceptor and do their biddings according to the pleasure of your husband.'



Loving Insistence for the husband's service

Instead of coronation, Shri Ram was banished suddenly. Just hearing this, Sitaji decided her duty. She detached herself fully from paternal and in-laws house, ornaments, clothes, royal family, palace, garden, servants, maids and enjoyments or all means of pleasures and passion and attachment. To remain with the husband like shadow, is the only duty of a wife. With this determination in her mind, whatever the ideal behaviour, Sitaji presented to accompany Lord Ram for the forest, is worth following and absolutely splendid. With modest and meek request Sitaji made her all efforts with obduracy to accompany Ram to the forest. She adopted all the proper and justifiable means of incantation and ultimately, she was successful in her effort. Her ultimate goal was to serve her husband by all means, living with her husband in the forest. She considered the same as her highest duty. In it she enjoyed supreme bliss. She says—

Mother, father, dear brother, sister, friends, kith and kins, father-in-law, mother-in-law, spiritual teacher (guru), son and all near and dear are the source of joy and comfort if there is the sweet company of the husband, otherwise they are far more tormenting than the scorching sun. But all the above, wealth, this palace, this earth and the whole empire becomes desert and the whole society becomes full of grief, the same pleasures become like disease, the same ornaments become burden to the body and this world

becomes torment of hell without the beloved husband. Nothing in this world is delightful to me.

Sitaji remains firm and sticks to her determination inspite of the several inconveniences and hardships of the forest and even after hearing the temptations and allurements of living in the family with the family members. She considers everything meaningless in comparison with devoted service to her husband.

O my lord! All the pleasures of the world are in your company and in looking your beautiful and glowing face like the moon in the winter.

It is proved here that receiving first the order of her husband, she urged affectionately and insisted to seek the command of her husband in accordance with her own desire. When Shri Ram did not agree to her at any cost, she went to the extent and she hinted that her heart will be torn apart.

‘Hearing such harsh words if the heart is not rent, how it is possible for my heart to bear the unbearable pain caused by the separation of my Lord Ram.’

According to Adhyatma Ramayan Sitaji has stated clearly to the extent that—

‘I too, have heard several tales of the Ramayan through the Brahmins. Kindly, quote any instance where it has been mentioned in any Lord Ram’s incarnation when Shri Ram has left for the forest alone without Sita leaving her behind in Ayodhya. Why is it so a new thing only this time? I must accompany you as your servant. If you don’t allow me to follow you at any cost, I will give up my life before you.’ To fulfill her desire to serve Ram, Sitaji, thus, stated even


these words of her own appreciation clear regarding her incarnation.

According to Valmiki Ramayan inspite of Sitaji's abject entreaty, great lamentation, prayers in many ways and stressing upon her decision to abandon her life and meeting him again in the next world after death, when Shri Ram did not agree to take her with him, she felt very much agonized and shedding the warm drops of tears incessantly from her eyes, enraged in love out of expediency, she went beyond the limit and spoke some such harsh words—'O Lord! It does not behove to an ideal and honourable man like you to think in mind even to go leaving me alone, who is your devotee, poor, and remains equal in joy or sorrow. My father had choosen you his son-in-law considering you valiant, bold and capable to protect me.' This statement also proves that Shri Ram was considered the most valiant and suprerior from the very childhood. Regarding this reference whatever has been narrated by Valmikiji and Goswami Tulsidasji about the conversation between Sita and Ram is worth-reading attentively and deserves to be pondered over by every man and woman.

The love of Sitaji had its sway and Shri Ram gave his consent to Sitaji to accompany him to the forest. This statement proves that a life partner has got right to argue on the order of her husband for her whole-hearted dedicated service to him and not to serve her own interest. She can do so for the sake of her husband's well being with due love and regard. Sitaji had declared even—'If you don't permit, even then I will accompany you.' No critic has criticised till now. Sitaji's this loving earnest request, because

Sitaji had become ready and rigid to go to the forest giving up her all the comforts and conveniences because of her deep-rooted love and devoted service to her husband and not for the enjoyment and with any selfish motive! Regarding this, it should not be misunderstood that Sitaji's behaviour was inappropriate or against the loyalty to husband. A woman has such a moral right to behave likewise. It is a moral for males to be learnt that it is improper to leave his chaste wife and go away against her wish. In the same way a woman, too, should stay with him for his comforts and service. Even after the opposition of the husband, at the time of peril and suffering, it is proper and moral for a woman to reside with him for his service. It is must to act upon according to the circumstances and situation. It can not be possible to expect to draw the similar line of action for everyone in all the situations. It depends on the individual to individual and time to time to determine the action and act accordingly.

Due to noble mindedness, Sitaji also did not act all the time in this way considering it as her right.



Pleasure in husband's service

In forest Sitaji remains always happy by all means in attending her husband forgetting all the things. She has forgotten the royal throne, state affairs, palace, gardens and lawns, wealth and property, maids and servants, everything. Back from the forest leaving Ram there, Sumant narrates to mother Kausalya, lamenting for Sitaji—"Sitaji resides in the forest fearlessly as in her own house. She is enjoying Ram's love fully devoted to him. Sitaji was not the least tormented because of the exile. It does seem to me that Sitaji exile with Ram is quite appropriate. The moon-faced virtuous Sita chats there also with Ram like a maiden even in the solitary forest just as she used to amuse herself here in the orchard. Sitaji's mind is fully anchored in Ram. Her life is under the subordination of Ram, so the forest is like Ayodhya for Sita with Ram and without Ram Ayodhya is forest.' What a unique and supreme devotion to husband! Really, her chastity is highly praiseworthy.

Service to mother-in-laws

Sitaji went to the forest for attending her life partner; but she was very much distressed that she was going to be devoid of the service to her mother-in-laws. Touching the feet of her mother-in-law, she expresses her feelings from the core and corner of her heart with tears in her eyes- 'Listen to me mother! I am the most unfortunate as I have been fated to exile at the time when I must attend you and thus, my heartiest desire remained unfulfilled. O mother! be not perturbed any more, cease not to entertain your love and affection towards me. Relentness is fate. Really, I am not at fault at all.'

This mutual understanding between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is an ideal. If the Indian daughters learn to behave like Kausalya and Sita, the Indian homes will be home of happiness and prosperity. If it so happens that mother-in-laws remain always anxious to see their daughter-in-laws happy and so also daughter-in-laws remain eager to serve their mother-in-laws, certainly on both the sides there will be rain of immense joy.



Forbearance

An example of Sitaji's forbearance is worth noting. At the time of exile when Kaikeyiji asks Sitaji to change her dress as is in vogue for banishment, even the heart of great sage like Vasisthaji is filled with deep sorrow and melted with grief but Sitaji not only listens to this silently but she puts on the dress also as per her instructions. This reference teaches the lesson to follow that the mother-in-law or any elder woman similar in relation, whatever says or behaves in any way, should be tolerated happily and whenever if any woman has to accompany her life partner to any place far away, she should depart after respectful greeting to her mother-in-laws with sincere heart, solacing them and expressing regret and repentance for being devoid of their service. The daughter-in-laws will be thus, blessed automatically by their mother-in-laws.



Free from Pride

Sitaji was so famous in the world for her chastity to her beloved husband at her time, that there was no question to preach her for fidelity to husband by anyone. But Sitaji was not in the least proud of her chastity to her husband. Sitaji heard the preaching delivered by Anusuyaji regarding the fidelity to the husband with great respect and patience and bowed her head to her feet with respectful greeting. She could not imagine even to feel that she knew everything and she was the master to it. Anusuyaji, herself, states—

‘O Sita! Listen! Other woman maintains vow of fidelity in devotion to their husband invoking your name. The story of your devoted love to Ram is narrated for the good of the world.’

A moral should be learnt from this to listen patiently, being totally free from pride with due regard to the counsels given by the elders and olders then we should practise them in our life to the best of our capacity.



Service to Elders and maintaining propriety

To bring to the memory, the reference is necessary of the royal king Janak's journey to Chitrakoot to understand how much Sitaji remained engrossed wholeheartedly in the service and maintaining propriety towards elders. After Bharat's departure for the forest, the king Janak also reaches Chitrakoot to meet Ram. The mother of Sita meets the mothers of Shri Ram—the mother-in-laws of Sita returns to her camp taking Sita with her. Everyone is grieved seeing Sita in the guise of an ascetic, but the king Janak feels highly gratified seeing his daughter's conduct and behaviour and expresses his feelings—

‘O my daughter! You have graced and purified both the families by your virtues! Your good conduct is so bright and appreciable that everyone says your fair renown has illumined the whole world.’

The mother and father both give her blessings and teach her several teachings of morality, embracing her to their bosom with great love and affection. In the conversation continuing for a long time, it becomes too late in the night. Sita thinks to herself that it is not proper to stay here in the night in such a situation as parting from the service of mother-in-laws, but because of being shy by nature, Sita cannot express her inner feelings to her parents due to bashfulness—

Sitaji felt uncomfortable in her mind and thus unable to say that it is not proper to stay here in the night!

The clever mother comes to guess the inner feelings of Sitaji and praises the virtuous nature of Sita to herself and made it known to the king. Thus, the parents send Sitaji in the camp of Kausalya. The woman should learn lesson from this reference also the lesson of dedicated service and etiquette.

Fearlessness

Just mark the radiance of character and fearlessness of Sitaji! Even the gods quiver just hearing the name of unconquerable and horrible Ravan, the same Ravan is faced by Sitaji fearlessly and without the least being afraid of him, she utters so many harsh words to him. Being under the clutches of Ravan, Sitaji is enraged excessively and disdaining him, she says—‘O wicked demon! Now, you are at the edge of death and now it is the end of your life, O stupid! By kidnapping the loving life-partner of Shri Ramchandraji, you want to tread on fire wrapped in cloth. The difference between you and Shri Ramchandraji is the same as between a jackal and a lion, between a drain and sea, between nectar and lemon juice, between the iron and gold, between the sandal and mud, between the cat and elephant, between Garuda (the vehicle of Lord Vishnu) and crow, between swan and vulture. So long as my Lord, having unlimited influence and power is alive, if you kidnap me, just like fly that dies when it drinks the clarified butter, you will also go to the jaws of death.’ It is to be learnt by it that no one need to be horrified in any condition having faith in the power of God. Injustice must be protested fearlessly. If there is true faith in the Almighty God; He will deliver us from calamities as he got released Sita from the clutches of Ravan.



Staking life for the cause of Dharm

Inspite of being in the grip of the calamities and disasters, Dharm should not be given up. In this context the example of Sitaji is supreme. All the possible attempts were made by the wicked Ravan to deviate her from the moral path in Ashok Vatika. The demonesses caused Sitaji great troubles and disturbed her by all means giving her temptations and causing her fear but sitaji was after all Sita. There was no question to give up piety and morality. Even by pretence, Sitaji did not do anything to be blamed either in her external or superficial behaviour. The evil ideas could not spring forth in her blotless, pious and virtuous mind. Remaining stubborn to her moral faith, Sita went on scaring wicked Ravan always in sharp and expedient words. Once, being unable to tolerate Ravan's arrow like words, and seeing Shri Ram-Lakshman dead by Ravan's magical power, she became ready to die, but the negative thought of giving up her fidelity did not occur even in her dream. She remained engrossed in her mind in the thought of Ram, day and night. The depth of Sita's mental piousness can be measured by her message conveyed to Ram through Hanuman-

‘Your name is the guard of day and night and the continuous your meditation concentrated to your feet is the door!’

‘Her eyes remain fixed to her own feet which serves as a lock and thus, there is no way for her life to go out!!’

By this example the women should learn the lesson that in the painful separation of the husband, in spite of unfortunate happenings and adversities, they should always concentrate

themselves in the meditation to the feet of their husbands. In the mind and heart there be patience, fortitude and spiritual energy fully depending on the omnipotence of the Almighty. Always stand ready for the abdication of their lives to discharge their moral and virtuous duty. Without Dharm, this life has no meaning, but death for the sake of Dharm is always blissful—‘स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः’ (Gita 3.35). Even death in performance of one’s own Dharm brings blessedness

Carefulness—Mark the prudence of Sitaji. When Hanumanji comes to Sitaji in Ashok Vatika, Sitaji verifies and tests very minutely through her astuteness. So long as she is not fully confident that Hanumanji is the messenger of Shri Ramchandra, and is powerful and he has come here only in my search, she does not converse with open mind.



Mutual Love between Husband and Wife

When Sitaji is fully convinced, first of all she asks about the well being of her husband and brother-in-Law and then, shedding tears, utters in pathetic voice—‘Hanuman! Raghunathji possesses a very tender heart. To shower kindness is his own nature, then, why he is so hard-hearted for me? He is the donator of immense joy to his adherent, then why has he forgotten me? Does Shri Raghunathji ever remember me? Brother! Will it be possible for my eyes to be soothed ever and be cool, seeing his lotus face? Oh! The Lord has completely erased me from his mind.’ Saying this Sita began to weep. Her throat choked and her voice restrained.

Words failed her and eyes were full of tears!

Oh! my Lord you have forgot me completely!!

Then after, when Hanumanji conveying the loving message of Shri Ram said so, ‘Mother! The love of Shri Ram is two-fold more than your love as he has instructed me to convey-

The reality about the chord of love that binds you and me, dear, is known to my mind alone. And my mind ever abides in you and you know this to be the essence of my love.’

‘Then hearing this, Sitaji was puffed up with joy. What an ideal mutual love between Shri Ram and Sita is! If all the men and women of the world begin to exchange their love to each other considering the love of Ram and Sita as an ideal, the worldly life will be full of happiness.




Abstinence from person other than husband

Reminding the incidence of Jayant, Sita said—‘O the best of monkeys! You, do tell me, how can I remain alive in such a situation? Even being capable of overpowering the enemy, Ram and Lakshman do not take my notice and do not take care of me. It shows that my sufferings have yet not come to an end.’ While speaking this, tears streamed forth from her eyes, consoling her, Hanumanji assured—‘Mother! Have patience for a few days. The destroyer of the enemies noble Shri Ram and Lakshman will come here and killing Ravan, he will take you to Avadhपुरi very soon. Don’t be distressed. If you have keen desire and permit me, by the mercy of Shri Ram and your kindnass, after killing Ravan and having ruined the entire Lanka, I can take you to Shri Ramchandraj. “O revered goddess! Be seated on my back, by the sky route I will cross the great ocean. The demons, here cannot catch me. Very soon, I will make it possible for you to reach close to Shri Ramchandra.” Hearing the words of Hanuman, and after testing his power and valour, Sitaji began to say—“O The best of mankeys! I, loyal, faithful and devoted to my husband, don’t want to touch any part of the body of any other person willingly except Shri Ramchandraj—

Keeping devotion to my Lord in the forefront O Monkey, I do not wish to touch of my own free will the body of any one other than Shri Ram. O jewel among monkey the wicked Ravan had forcibly touched my body as I was under his clutches and helpless. Now let Shri Ramji himself

come here and after killing Ravan along with all the demons and lead me to accompany him then only his glorious fame will radiate.”

Just think over, a true and faithful attendant like Hanuman, who considers Sitaji more than his mother and the devoted service to Sita and Ram, is the only goal of his life, Sita does not want to touch even him to protect her chastity inspite of being even in such a horrible peril. What a unique and wonderful example of her chastity is? It should be learnt by this instance that a woman should not touch any part of any other one's body except that of her own husband, even in any great calamity.



Extremely grieved due to Separation

How much love between Shri Ram and Sita was and their extreme restlessness and eagerness to meet each other, can be gauged to some extent by the different versions of Sita from the time of her kidnapping till time of the victory over Lanka. While reading these references, there would be hardly any one left untouched with the feelings of compassion, pathos and pity. But the greatest proof of Sitaji actual consternation is that the Lord Raghunathji intoxicated in the madness of love like a common effeminated man, lamenting with tears in his eyes asks Rishikumars, sun, wind, animals, birds, trees and creepers wandering hear and there enquiring about Sita and her whereabouts—


‘O the god—Sun! The apprehender of all the acts of commission and omission of the world! You are the witness of all the good and evil doings. Some one has kidnapped my beloved, or she has gone anywhere willingly, it is well known to you. So, tell all about it to me, overwhelmed with sorrow. O the wind god! Nothing is hidden to you in all the three worlds, you are omnipresent. Sita, the guardian angel of my dynasty, had disappeared. Be merciful to disclose the truth whether she has died, kidnapped or she has lost her path and is wandering about.’

Alas! Sita, Janak’a daughter, the very mine of virtues, of such flawless beauty, character, austerity and devotion! Lakshman consoled Him in many ways. He questioned all the creepers and trees (that stood on the way) as He went along (in search of Her). ‘O birds and deer, O string of

bees, have you seen the fawn-eyed Sita? In this way the Lord searched and lamented like an uxorious husband sore smitten with pangs of Separation.'

By this it should not be understood that Lord Shri Ram was exceedingly grieved due to separation or exceedingly lascivious. It was the devoted love to Ram and she was so mad for him that Shri Ram, too, had to behave likewise. The pledge in words of the Lord is—

'In whatsoever way men are devoted to me even so do I respond to them' (Gita IV/11). Acting like an uxorious husband sore smitten with pangs of separation, Lord Ram vindicated this doctrine. So we should learn lesson that if we are impatiently anxious to attain God, He too, will also be anxious for us in the same way. So, everyone should be restless to attain God.



Ordeal By Fire

Ravan was slaughtered. By the order of Shri Ram, Vibhishana takes Sitaji to Ram after getting her bathed and donned in fine clothes and ornaments. After a long separation, seeing the full moon-like face of her beloved Shri Ram, Sita's all suffering vanished and her face glared like full moon. But Shri Ram made it clear—'I fulfilled my duty. Having slaughtered Ravan and extricated you from the clutches of the wicked, but you have already passed the days at his residence, Ravan has cast his evil glance at you, so I don't want to keep you with me. Go anywhere as you wish. I cannot accept you.'

There is no more attachment for you in my heart. you may, therefore, go wherever you like.

Hearing the harsh, piercing and horrid words, unheard before, chaste Sita's condition cannot be described in words. All the organs of Sita's body were fiercely wounded by the piercing arrows of the Lord's words. She burst into tears. Then, in the most pitiable thudding sound she uttered slowly and slowly in choked voice—

'O Lord! Why do you use such harsh tormenting and clingiest words for me like a common man? Taking the oath of my chastity I urge you to trust on me. O Dear one! When Ravan had touched my body having kidnapped, I was helpless and under his control. Here my fate alone is to blame and not I. If you had to do so, then, when you had sent Hanumanji to me just at that moment, you should have forsaken me, till now I would have given up

my life at least.' Shri Sitaji stated many versions, but Shri Ramji did not reply at all. Then, overwhelmed with humility and anxiety she spoke to Lakshman—'O the son of Sumitra! I don't want to remain alive being disgraced by such mendacity. Kindly prepare the pyre here, as this is the only antidote for my deliverance from this calamity. Being displeased with my conduct, my dear husband has given me up before the assembly of people, now I want to end my this life by self-immolation'. Hearing the words of Vaidehi Sita, Lakshman glanced once with red eyes furious with anger at Shri Ramchandra, but Lakshman used to act according to the wishes of Shri Ram, watching his attitude by appearance and indication, he prepared a pyre as per his will. Going near the blazing fire and after making obeisance to the gods and Brahmins Sita prayed with folded hands—

'O the God of fire! If my heart never been turned away from Shri Ramchandrajai, protect me by all means. Protect me by all the means by which Shri Raghunathji may come to be acquainted well with the truth about the chastity of my character or harlot Sita, because you are the witness of the entire universe. Having versed these words, going round the fire, Sita entered the burning fire with dauntless heart. The distressful lamentation was perpetrated all around. The Lord Brahma, Lord Shiv, Kuber, Lord Indra, Yamraj and Varun, wind etc., gods appeared and began to persuade Shri Ram. Lord Brahmaji disclosed many mysteries.

In the meanwhile, the fire god, the witness of all the worlds, suddendy appeared having Sita in his lap and dedicating Vaidehi to Shri Ram, versed—

‘O Ram! Accept your Vaidehi Sita. She is blameless without any sin. O the proud of your character Ram! This blessed Sita never violated you by her thought, speech, mind and eye. In the solitary jungle when you were not with her, this poor was helpless and incapacitated. That is why Ravan proud of his vigour, had abducted her forcibly. Although she was kept underground of the palace and the ogresses of most cruel nature were posted to guard her, she was tempted by many temptations and scorned also, but Sita, having her heart set upon you and fully devoted to you, did not even dream of any other one in her mind and heart. She is absolutely of untainted mind. She is sinless. I order you to accept her without any suspicion’.

Hearing the words of the fire God, the dignified Lord Ram became very happy. His eyes were full of immense joy. He said—‘O Fire God! The purification of Sita in this way was necessary. Have I adopted her in usual way, it would have been uttered by the people that son of Dasharatha was stupid and lascivious. (Some would have suspected her chastity even by which her glory would have been damaged, Today, because of this fire test, the face of Sita as well as myself has become glorious.) I know that the daughter of Janak, Sita is undivided in her affection to me and whole-heartedly agreeable to my will. Just as the ocean cannot go beyond its bounds, she maintains her chastity and merit through her moral power. The vicious Ravan could not violate this sita like the blazing fire. Sita like sun-shine is integral and not distinct from me. Just as a great soul cannot give up his fame, in reality, I too, cannot

give up Sita, absolutely unsullied in all the three worlds in the same way.'

Having uttered so and accepting Sita, Lord Shri Ram experienced great felicity. From this context a moral should be drawn that a woman should not be displeased with her husband in any condition at any cost and must endeavour, by all just means to satisfy him.

Household-Duties

Sita with her Lord and brother-in-law, returns to Ayodhya. She makes obeisance to all the elders and olders and her all the mother-in-laws. The happiness spreads over all around. Now, Sitaji engages herself in attending her mother-in-laws and renders her services to them so sincerely that all became charmed. Sitaji discharges all the household duties in such an excellent manner that all are fully satisfied. Let a moral should be drawn from this, that just after coming back from abroad, to make obeisance to all the elders and olders and the mother-in-laws and render services to the mother-in-laws etc., devotedly and discharge all the house-hold duties in a proper way excellently, is necessary for women.



Equanimity in Conduct

Sitaji treated Bharat, Lakshman and Satrughna, the brother-in-laws, just like her own son and never differentiated them by any way in food and drink etc. Sitaji prepared the same type of meal for the younger brothers of her Lord as the meal was prepared for her Lord Shri Ram. Outwardly, it seems to be of a little importance, but now in India thousands of joint families are deteriorating from bad to worse day by day only because of making a difference merely in the food items and the partial treatment. The women should maintain impartiality in behaviour and not to be partial in food and drink. This should be learnt from Sitaji's equableness in behaviour.



Abandonment of Sita

Once hearing the public slander regarding Sita through his detectives Ram being grieved, began to say to Lakshman—‘Brother! I know that Sita is pure and celebrated, she had testified herself by entering the blazing fire in Lanka before you and the witness of the entire universe. Fire-god himself, having appeared, had announced about Sita to be blameless and chaste before all the gods and sages, yet because of the public slander, I have made up my mind to abandon Sita. So, tomorrow in the morning itself, seating Sita in the chariot of charioteer Sumant, drive across the Ganges river, on the bank of the river Tamasa near the hermitage of the saint Valmiki in the solitary jungle and having left Sita there, come back. I hereby, administer you an oath of my feet as well as of my life, not to utter anything in this context. You will not disclose anything to Sitaji even at present. Lakshman with afflicted heart followed his order silently and next day in the morning asking Sumant got the chariot ready. Once, Sitaji had prayed Shri Ram to go to the hermitage of the sages, so hearing about going to the forest from Lakshman, Sitaji understood merely that the Lord had permitted her to go to the hermitage of the sages. Hence, she bade farewell for the forest with valuable ornaments, clothes and several other things to distribute among the sages’ wives. Seeing the evil omens on the way, Sita asked Lakshman—‘Brother! Is everything normal and whether all are well in our town and home?’ Lakshman

said—‘All are well.’ Lakshman tolerated up to this extent but just after reaching the bank of the Ganges, Lakshman’s heart was filled with the tormentation of pain and he burst into tears like a helpless man. Seeing weeping Lakshman, who was sober and conversant with the nature of religion, Sita began to say ‘Brother! Why do you weep? We have now, reached about the hermitages of the sages on the bank of the Ganges here, we should be happy but contrary to it, you are lamenting. You live with Shri Ramchandraji day and night, did you become so much grieved even due to the separation of only for two nights from Ram. O, the prominent among the human beings! Ram is dearer more than my heart to me also, but I don’t mourn! Leave this childish nature and crossing the Ganges and after reaching the other side of the river, assist me to have a vision of the ascetics. Having distributed the different materials to the ascetics and having worshipped them properly and having stayed for one night merely, we will come back. My mind is also feeling keen to have vision of lotus-eyed Shri Ram, having the lion like bosom and superior among the giver of blessedness.’

Lakshman did not respond at all on Sita’s version and boarding on the boat with Sita crossed the Ganges. Reaching the other side of the Ganges, he started weeping loudly and bitterly. After Sita’s repeated question and command, referring to the public slander, downcasting his head, Lakshman made the speech interrupted by sobs—‘O goddess! You are blameless, but Shri Ram has abandoned

you now, cherishing Shri Ram in your heart and maintaining the chastity to the husband, be pleased to stay here in the hermitage of Valmiki Muni’.

Just hearing the horrible words of Lakshman, Sitaji fell down being unconscious. After a while when she came into senses, she began to wail and said—‘O Lakshman! Brahma, the creator has created my body to undergo misery. I don’t understand how many couples had been caused to be separated by me; due to that reason, I am relinquished by the virtuous, beloved husband in spite of being faithful and chaste, bearing a moral character. O Lakshman! In the past when I was in the forest, on account of getting golden opportunity to offer my dedicated services to the Lord, I was happy even in the miseries of the forest. But O amiable, now, in the separation of dear Lord, how will I be able to live in the hermitage? What will be my answer when the sages, munies and saints will put question before me, why has Shri Raghunathji abandoned you? Stricken by sorrow since birth whom will I narrate my misfortune? what will be my answer when they ask me—‘Had you done any foul deed?’ O the son of Sumitra! Just today, I would have given up my life by drowning myself in to the Ganges, in me there lies the dynasty-seed. If I die by drowning myself in the Ganges, there will be annihilation of Lord’s dynasty. So I cannot die even. O Lakshman! If there is royal command to you, leave an unfortunate like me here, and go away but continue listening my some expressions.’

‘On my behalf pay obeisance to all my mother-in-laws with folded hands and then you ask about his well being conveying my reverential salutation to His majesty—Shri Ram. O Lakshman! Bowing your head before all, you will convey my reverential salutation to them and you will convey my request to the majesty who is embedded in righteousness-

‘O Scion of the Raghu! As you consider me more pure in mind and full of devotion and always concerned about your welfare, I know that you have abandoned me only to avoid the public slander and to maintain the grace and glory of your lineage, but for me, you are my only resort. O majesty! as you treat your brothers, you will provide the similar treatment to the subjects also. O Raghav! This is only your highest moral conduct that which leads to unrivalled fame. The rule over the subjects by canon law bestows upon the spiritual gain. Hence, you shall never present example of any such a deed as may bring you slander. O Raghunandan! I am not the least agrieved for my body because for a woman her husband is the supreme god. It is only the husband who is the noblest friend and only the husband is her spiritual guide. This is positively the natural moral of a woman to keep her husband dearer than her life, pleased for ever by her acts favourite to him and remain always pleased in doing so.’

How touching words are! Really, Loyal and faithful Sita is praiseworthy, highly admirable in her passion for religion and affectionate feeling for the subject! glorious

is the chastity of Indian women! The most praiseworthy is the unprecedented dedication of the Indian women!!!

Sitaji again uttered—‘O Lakshman! Convey my this message to the majesty Lord Ram. Brother, One thing more, I am at present pregnant, casting glance at me, make sure of it otherwise public may not slander that sita procreates issues arriving in the forest.’

Having heard these words of Sita, remorseful Lakshman became impatient and having fallen on the feet of Sita bowing his head, burst into tears and began to wail loudly. Again, having risen, took a reverential circumambulation of Sitaji and having concentrated his mind for a while uttered—‘Mother!’ O the spotless, pious and the devotee of husband! What are you saying this? Till this moment I have seen only your feet, and did not notice your countenance. Today in the absence of Ram how can I cast my eyes upon you? Then after paying obeisance, shedding tears from his eyes Lakshman departed and by boarding on the boat returned back and on the other hand Sita overwhelmed by sorrow, an ideal devotee of the husband virtuous Sita—began to wail loudly in the jungle. Hearing the wail of Sitaji Valmikiji took her to his hermitage.

Whatever can be learnt by this incident is moral duty of Indian women. The above sentences spoken by Sitaji must be recited daily in routine and her essence should be adopted in our daily life. The behaviours of Lakshman also is the gospel of truth that inspires us to learn that in spite of a woman’s equality in rank and relation and may

be she is like mother in rank, a man must not look at any organ of her body. Similarly the women should also not show any part of her body to the man. In the hermitage of Valmikiji, Sita lived with the saint's wife in the inner part of the hermitage by the order of the sage. It is to be learnt from this that if any chance occurs to stay at any other one's house, the women should stay with women in the inner part of the house. And in the same way, if we have to keep any other woman at our house, she should be kept with the women in the interior part of the house.

Entry into Patal

The woman, who abides by her own Dharm, even at the stake of life enjoys good results in the end. When Lord Shri Ramchandraji performs Horse-sacrifice and becomes charmed by hearing the chanting of the Ramayan by Lava-Kush, then Lava-Kush are recognised and by the order of Shri Ram, Sita was called upon there. Sita, cherishing Ram in her mind her face downcast and having tears in her eyes with folded hands she is coming just behind Valmikiji. Whatever is uttered by Valmikiji in the assembly after joining it, removes the entire public slander completely and the entire country is sounded by the acclamation of Sita-Ram. Narrating the chastity of Sita, he went to the extent that—‘I have practiced penance for thousands of years, I quote on the oath of that penance that if Sita’s character is vicious, may all the merits of my penance and devotion perish! I give assurance by my spiritual intuition and spiritual knowledge that Sita is highly chaste and pure beyond the limit.’ Hearing the vow of Valmiki and seeing Sita’s presence in the assembly, Lord Shri Ram became puffed up with joy and began to say—‘O the most fortunate! I know that Janaki is pure like gold, Lava-Kush are my own sons, I was compelled to give up Sita only to follow the royal duty. So, pardon me.’

Lord Brahma, the creator of the world, Sun, Vasu, Rudra, Vishvadev, Wind, Sadhya, Sages, Serpent King, Suparn and Siddha etc., are sitting in the assembly. Ram again says before them—‘In this world Vaidehi is pure and

I have the heartiest love for her.' This is to be proclaimed within the sight of every body.

In the meanwhile, in saffron dress, downcasting her head, chaste Sita cherishing Shri Ram in her mind began to see towards the earth and prayed—

'If I have never thought of anyone except Ram even in mind, O the Charming Goddess (Madhavi Devi) merge me in yourself, the mother earth! Make the way for me. If I am not acquainted with any other one else but Ram as I worship Shri Ram in mind, speech and action, if it is true, O Madhavi Devi (Charming Goddess)! Be merciful to provide one space in yourself and O mother Earth! Provide me the way.'

Just after her these three oaths, suddenly, the earth cracked, divine throne appeared. That divine throne had been lifted on by the serpents donned with the divine clothes and divine excellent ornaments on their heads and the Mother Earth was sitting on the throne. The goddess earth embraced Sita with her both hands and blessing Sita as 'O daughter! May you be blessed!' Seated her in her lap in the meantime the throne entered the nether world in the twinkling of eye before all. All the three worlds were sounded by the acclamation of Sita.

The Motive behind Sita's abandonment

Here, the question arises that Lord Shri Ram was very kind and just, why did he abandon Sita inspite of knowing that she was innocent and blameless? Mainly there are five reasons behind it. By paying attention to these causes it will be proved that Ram was certainly justified and his such action was proper.

1—Such a public discussion had come to the notice of Ram—that 'Ram accepted Sita in his house even after she had come back having stayed in Ravan's villa. So, if our house-wives happen to stay at other's house, we will tolerate it because the subject follows the same whatever is done by the king. By this feeling of the subject, the Lord thought that it was only in his knowledge that Sita was blameless. The common people don't know this. They will generally learn from this that a woman can very freely and frankly live at other's house without any hesitation. By such a social custom, the woman's moral will be ruined and hybridism will expand. So, for the protection of the subject's morality, Sita, dearer than heart, should be given up. In the separation of Sita, there was unbearable pain to Ram, his heart was bursting in remorse, Nobody can imagine the feelings of his heart and its condition, but after going through the Valmiki's Ramayan and Uttar Ramcharita, a little bird's eye view can be possible. For the protection of his duty to the subjects, he sacrificed his duty to the individual, his own self. In the fire pit of his subject's

interest, he offered an oblation of Sita, a manifestation of his own soul. It reveals the intensity of his love for his subjects. Sita is Ram and Ram is Sita. Shakti and Shaktiman jointly do control the mankind. Hence, Sita's abandonment is beyond question. Thus, Sita's sacrifice is genuine also in the interest of world order.

2—The number of people might be scanty but definitely there were a few to accuse her without ground. This false accusation could not be wiped out without the sacrifice and if Sita had not been proclaimed pious by Valmiki on oath, keeping her in his hermitage and if she had not entered the womb of the Earth, probably the blame would not have been washed away and it would have spread widely and Sita would not be remembered with that respectful feeling as she is remembered today with high regard as an ideal. On this ground also, Sita's desertion is appropriate.

3—Sita was supreme devotee of Shri Ram and his dependent. She was his most beloved better-half. The blame of the abandonment of Sita mercilessly, was owned up by Lord Shri Ram because it added to the glory of Sita and the false blame to Sita was also removed and Sita became venerable to the universe. The Lord owns up the wrongs done by his devotees to increase their glory and the same happened here.

4—The purpose of incarnation had been almost over, the gods had already given its indication to Sitaji. It is written in the Adhyatma Ramayan that In the guise of human being the Lord continued ruling lawfully for ten

thousand years and all subjects went on worshipping his lotus feet. The Lord Ram was the royal sage, highly pious and faithful to a single wife and discharged all the moral duties of a domestic life methodically with a view to maintain the world order. Sitaji, very much faithful and devoted to her husband, kept her husband's inner self pleased with devoted love, favourable conduct, meekness, control over her instincts and organs, shyness, fear by adverse conduct etc., virtues comprehending the feelings of the Lord. Once, Shri Ram was sitting in the flower-garden and Sitaji was caressing his delicate feet. Viewing the loneliness Sitaji said to the Lord—'O Supreme Lord! You are the Lord of the universe - Parmatma, eternal embodiment of existence, bliss and consciousness and without the beginning, middle, end and the cause of all. O God! That day, Indra, the king of Gods and other gods came to me uttering the prayer and said to me—'O the mother of the universe! You are the consciousness itself, be kind to set out for the heaven first then Lord Ram will also arrive there to the heaven and will become our patron.' Whatever the gods had prayed, I have submitted before you. This is not my command. You may do as you think proper.' Pondering over for a moment, the Lord said—


'O goddess! I know everything and I tell you a device. O Sita! By the pretence of public slander like a common man, I will abandon you in the forest showing the reason of public slander. There in the hermitage of Valmiki you will give birth to two sons, because at present they are

in your womb. Then after, coming to me, having taken oath with great regard for the conviction of the people, entering the interior part of the earth, you will reach the Heaven and then after, I too, will follow you. This is the decision.' This is also one of the reasons of Sita's desertion.

5. In the ancient time, once, having been defeated by the gods, the absconded demons reached the hermitage of Bhriguji's wife and began to live there without any fear having been blessed for immortality by the Sage-wife. The wife of Bhrigu provided them shelter. Being enraged, over this happening Lord Vishnu had cut her head with his discus. Seeing his wife having been killed in this way, the sage-Bhrigu, being furious in wrath lost his sense and had cursed the Lord that—'O Lord Janardan (Vishnu)! In wrath you slayed my wife, not deserving to be killed. So, you will have to take birth on the earth in the human world and would have to bear your wife's separation for a long period. The Lord accepted this curse for the well-being of the mankind and to prove the truth of that curse, he sent for the sport - sake Sita—not distinct from his own self, to the forest.

On account of many different reasons, the banishment of Sita was undoubtedly justified for Ram. But, the fact is that Lord Ram and Sita are manifestation of Narayan and Shakti. They are the two forms of the same great 'Tattva'. They only know the mystery of their sports. We have no right to criticise. We ought to be benefited by their sports and make our human life sacred.

In the manly plays, Sitaji proved this that if the husband gives up his innocent and virtuous wife, even then, this is the duty of a woman that in this misery, having passed the terribly grieved life, even she should remain devoted to her Lord and protect the loyalty to her husband. The result will be surely blissful.



Kunti Devi—An Ideal Lady

Kunti Devi was an ideal lady. She was the mother of the high-souled *Pandavas* and father's sister of Shri Krishna. She was Vasudeva's own sister and was given in adoption to king Kuntibhoj. Since her birth people called her Pritha but as she was brought up by king Kuntibhoj, she was popularly known as Kunti. Since her childhood she was good-natured, virtuous, self-controlled and a devotee. One day a highly sublime *Brahman* came as a guest to king Kuntibhoj. The task of attending on him was entrusted to maiden Kunti. She had great devotion for the *Brahmans* and took great interest in serving the guests. Shaking off her sloth and pride she devoted herself heart and soul to the service of the revered *Brahman*. She earned the pleasure of the revered *Brahman* through serving him with a pure heart. The revered *Brahman* however, behaved in a queer manner. Sometimes he would turn up at an untimely hour and sometimes he did not turn up at all for days together and sometimes he demanded a thing which was hard to find but Pritha would satisfy him by all means as if she had made preparations for the same beforehand. The *Brahman* felt great satisfaction over her amiable nature, virtuous conduct and restrained manners. The service rendered by her to the *Brahman* during her childhood proved a benediction to her and it laid the foundation of self-control, virtuous conduct, self-sacrifice and a sense of service in her life. In her later life these qualities developed in her exceptionally.

The sentiment of selfless service had developed in

Kunti since her childhood. She had spent full one year in serving the high-souled *Brahman* with great dedication and promptness. She had completed the observance of sacred duty of service. The *Brahman* could not scan any fault with her service. As a result he was very happy with her. He said to her—"My daughter, I am much pleased at your dedicated service. Ask for any boon you desire." Kunti gave a befitting reply to the revered *Brahman*. This reply was quite befitting the *Bua* (father's sister) of Shri Krishna and the would-be mother of the *Pandavas*. Kunti said—"you and father both are happy with me and this much is enough for the fulfilment of all my desires. No more do I stand in need of the bestowal of boons." The devotion to service with a spirit of unselfishness was indeed an extraordinary combination in a minor girl. The girls of our country ought to take a lesson from the ideal of selfless service of Kunti. Hospitality to guests has been the life-breath of our social life and the Indians would receive its training since their very childhood. The sincere and *Sattvik* service is one which is rendered cheerfully, without the feeling of burdensome, uneasiness and with no self-interest. Generally these two feelings are absent in services rendered these days. The service rendered cheerfully and without selfish motive becomes the supreme means of one's salvation.

Hence, when Kunti did not ask for any boon from the *Brahman*, the latter insisted her to accept from him the *Mantra* capable of invoking gods. He had the desire to give Kunti something or the other before his departure. This time

she could not spurn the offer thinking that *Brahman* may take her denial as his insult. Then he initiated her into the *Mantras* occurring in the preliminary section of the *Atharva Veda* and said—"Whichever god you will invoke through these *Mantras* that shall become subservient to you." Saying these words the *Brahman* disappeared then and there. The *Brahman* was none else than Durvasa the great sage who practised severe penance. Through the occult influence of these *Mantras* she was blessed with sons like Yudhishtir, by virtue of the grace of gods like Dharm and others.

Kunti was married to king Pandu. He was a very righteous person. Once he unknowingly killed sage Kindama who was disguised as a deer. This incident aroused in his heart the feeling of great remorse and dispassion. Having renunciated everything he began to dwell in the forest. Kunti was extremely devoted to her husband. Having subdued her senses and giving up sensual enjoyment, she became ready to live in the forest with her husband. She faithfully observed continence till the end of her life and lived a life of self-restraint. When her husband left for his celestial abode, she willed to follow her husband leaving her children to the care of Madri her younger co-wife. But Madri opposed it. She said—"I am still quite young hence I shall follow my husband. Instead you should take care of my children." Kunti agreed to her proposal and till the end of her life paid greater care to her sons than her own. Our mothers and sisters should take lesson from Kunti's life how one's co-wife and her children should be treated by

one. During her husband's life-time she treated Madri like her own sister and after she burnt herself alive at the pyre of her husband, she entertained the same feelings for her children as a pious lady should entertain. She had a great affection for Sahadev and he too had a deep love and reverence for her.

Since the death of Kuntidevi's husband her life became a tale of continuous troubles. But she was very thoughtful and was endowed with forbearance. So she did not at all mind the troubles and did not deviate from the path of righteousness till the end. She patiently endured the atrocities inflicted by Duryodhan. She had a very tender and compassionate heart. She did not at all mind her own trouble but she could not bear to see others in trouble. After safely coming out of the house made of lac, she began to live in a city called Ekchakra, during those days the people of the place lived under the stress of a great horror. A demon named Bakasur lived in the suburb of that city. The inhabitants of the city had to supply a cart load of foodgrain and two she-buffaloes for that demon everyday. The demon devoured the man too who took these things to him. The inhabitants had to do this work by turns. One day it was the turn of that house for sending a man to that demon, in which *Pandavas* had taken shelter as beggars. There rose a great hue and cry in the *Brahman's* family. When Kunti came to know of this fact, her heart was filled with great pity. She reflected thus—It will be a matter of great shame for us if in spite of our presence, the *Brahman* has to

undergo trouble. Besides he had provided us the shelter. We should repay his debt someway or the other. The failure to repay the debt of a benefactor on time, is verily a lapse from righteous conduct. Since we live in his house, it is our duty to partake of their trouble. Reflecting that way, Kunti went to the *Brahman's* house. She found *Brahman* sitting with his wife and son. He said to his wife—"You belong to a noble family, are virtuous and mother of your children. I cannot send you to the demon in order to save my life." Hearing the words of husband the *Brahman's* wife said—"No, I myself shall go to him. The supreme duty of a wife is to do good to her husband even at the cost of her life. It is a matter of blessedness for a woman to leave for the other-world prior to her husband. "It is just possible that demon may not kill me, considering as woman is not worth killing. Killing of the man is sure but a woman's killing is doubtful so send me to him." Hearing the pathetic conversation between father and mother the daughter said—"Well, according to custom both of you will abandon me one day or the other. Then why, don't you save yourselves by abandoning me this day. People crave for children so that they might save them from trouble." Hearing those words the parents began to weep. The daughter too could not help her tears. Seeing all of them weeping the *Brahman's* tiny son spurted out—"My father, my mother and sister, please don't weep." Then picking up a straw laughingly he said that he could kill the demon with its help. Then all burst into laughter. Kunti had been seeing and hearing all this, she stepped

forward and said—"Sire, you have but one son and one daughter. By the grace of God I have five sons. I shall send one of them to carry the demon's food to him, don't you worry. The revered *Brahman* expressed reluctance to the proposal of Kuntidevi. He said—"O revered one, your words beehve you but I can't allow my guest to be killed for my sake." Then Kunti explained to him that the son she would send to the demon, was very powerful, accomplished in *Mantras* and was puissant. One cannot cause any harm to him." At this the *Brahman* agreed. Then Kunti deputed Bhima for the job and sent him to the demon. Can any mother knowingly sacrifice in such a way her son, who is the part and parcel of her life for other's sake. Needless it is to say that this ideal sacrifice of Kunti has left a desirable impression all over the world. Hence all must take a lesson from her life.

Kunti's devotion to truth was an ideal one. She did not resort to falsehood even while jesting, by mistake if some words escaped her mouth, she tried even at the stake of her life to be true to them. In the history another example of such steadfastness towards truthfulness would not be available. Having won Draupadi in *Swayamvar* when Arjun and Bhima approached their mother and said—"Mother, we have got this as alms today." Without looking at what it was she said—"Let all the five brothers use it together." When she came to know that they had brought a girl, she became much perplexed. She thought to herself that if she withdrew her words she would be committing a sin of falsehood and

if she asked her sons to obey her words, the long established tradition would come to naught. The event of five brothers marrying one lady was unprecedented, under such circumstances Kuntidevi could not decide what to do. She became perplexed. At last she asked for the opinion of Yudhishtir who advised her to stick to the truth. Later on when king Drupad protested against it Vedvyasji related to them the story of Draupadi's previous birth and explained to them by virtue of the boon granted to her by Shankarji, all the five brothers would marry the daughter of Drupad. Under the circumstances the daughter of Drupad was married in the prescribed way to all the five brothers. Kuntidevi's dedication to truthfulness gained victory. The words that spurted out of her mouth conformed to what was destined to happen. Such a coincidence is not impossible, provided truth is strictly adhered to.

From beginning to the end Kunti's life was remarkable for self-denial, austerities and detachedness. During the period of the *Pandavas*' banishment and even living incognito, she lived separately at Hastinapur and from there she sent to her sons message of strictly adhering to the duties pertaining to the *Kshatriyas* through her nephew Shri Krishna. Quoting the example of Vidula and Sanjay, she sent to them heart-touching words—"My sons, the occasion for which a *Kshatrani* gives birth to her sons has cropped up. Do not put to shame the milk that you sucked from my breast." Even during the period of *Mahabharat* war she stayed there and after the end of the war when Dharmaraj

Yudhishtir, was enthroned and she was blessed with the status of mother queen (*Rajmata*), she took upon herself the duty of serving her husband's brother and his wife who were bereaved of their sons and ridding herself of malice and arrogance, began to spend her time attending on them. Moreover, when they proceeded towards the forest with the consent of Yudhishtir, she silently followed them. In spite of all persuasions made by Yudhishtir and others, she did not deviate from her firm determination. After a life time period of troubles and miseries when the days of happiness dawned on her, it was the work of a pious lady like Kunti to deny herself the worldly enjoyments and to accept for herself at her own free will the life of renunciation, austerities and service. The example of making such sacrifice for the same brother of her husband and his wife from whom she got nothing but troubles, insult and atrocities for herself, her sons and their wives, is hard to find in the world. Our mothers and sisters should take lesson from the matchless spirit of sacrifice of Kuntidevi.

While Kuntidevi was proceeding towards the forest, Bhimasen tried to bring home to her saying—"Mother, if this was to be done by you, why did you make us indulge in such an orgy of bloodshed? Why did you bring us to the city after the death of our father who was a forest dweller?" What Kuntidevi said in reply at the time is worth being borne in mind. She said—"Dear son, I inspired you to fight simply that you might not sit idly in a cowardly manner, might not lead despicable life by giving up the ultimate goal

befitting the *Kshatriyas* and that you may not be deprived, for ever, of your just rights; I did not do so for the sake of my own happiness. I do not cherish the desire for enjoying kingly life. Now through practising austerities, I want to attain the realms attained by my husband. So attending on my husband's brother and his wife I mean to spend the rest of my life observing austerities. You should return home cheerfully and righteously nourishing your subjects, try to provide happiness to the members of your family." Thus consoling her sons Kuntidevi sallied for the forest in the company of her husband's brother and his wife, living with them in their service till the end of their life and finally gave up her mortal frame like *Yogis* by entering into the forest-fire with them. Ideal ladies like Kuntidevi are rarely to be found in the history of the world.

Devi Draupadi

Devi Draupadi was the daughter of Drupad, the king of Panchal, but she was not born of a womb. She emanated as it were, from a sacrificial altar. She possessed unparalleled charm and grace. No contemporary woman upon the earth possessed such charm as she, such fragrance as is wafted by freshly blooming lotuses, exhaled from her body and spread about two miles around her. At the time of her birth there was an oracle—"This gem among the ladies has taken birth for the fulfilment of gods' plan and extirpating the *Kshatriyas* from the face of the earth. She will be the cause of a great terror to the *Kauravas*." Dark complexioned as she was people called her Krishna (having dark coloured skin). By virtue of the boon granted to her in her previous birth, She had five husbands in the present birth. In spite of the fact that she was won by Arjun alone at the *Swayamvar*, all the five brothers wedded her according to the behest of Kunti.

Draupadi was ardently devoted to the Lord and supremely faithful to her husbands. She had unflinching love for the revered feet of Lord Krishna. She considered Him not only as a saviour, well-wisher and claimed Him to be her supreme kinsman but also had profound faith in His omnipotence and omnipresence. In the assembly of the *Kauravas*, when Duhshasan tried to strip her off her clothes in order to derobe her and none of the courtiers dared oppose the inhuman atrocity, she finding no way out

to save herself piteously cried for Shri Krishna's help thus—

गोविन्द द्वारकावासिन् कृष्ण गोपीजनप्रिय ॥
 कौरवैः परिभूतां मां किं न जानासि केशव ।
 हे नाथ हे रमानाथ ब्रजनाथार्त्तिनाशन ।
 कौरवार्णवमग्रां मामुद्धरस्व जनार्दन ॥
 कृष्ण कृष्ण महायोगिन् विश्वात्मन् विश्वभावन ।
 प्रपन्नां पाहि गोविन्द कुरुमध्येऽवसीदतीम् ॥

(*Mahabharat, Sabha. 68. 41-43*)

“O Govind, who dwelleth in Dwārakā, O Krishna, the beloved of the *Gopīs*, O Keśava, are you not aware of the fact that I am being humiliated by the *Kauravas*.

O universal Lord, the consort of Ramā,

O saviour of Vraja and destroyer of all suffering,

O Lord creator of the universe,

O Janardana, save me from flaundering in the ocean of the *Kauravas*' tyranny.

O Govinda, save me who have taken refuge in you and who has fallen into the clutches of the *Kauravas*.”

The Lord listens to the piteous outcry of a sincere heart without any delay. At that time Shri Krishna was staying at Dwārakā. From there He rushed upto her and hiding Himself in the form of Dharm in her garments saved her modesty. By the grace of God, the length of Draupadi's saree increased times without number. The more Duhshasan pulled at it, the longer it grew. In no time a heap of clothes was visible there. The mighty arms of the most powerful Duhshasan lost their vigour but the other end of the saree was not yet accessible. All who were present in the

assembly witnessed this miraculous outcome of devotion to the Lord and feminine chastity. At last Duhshasan defeatedly and shamefacedly sat down. The Lord who is ever affectionate to His devotees, saved the modesty of His devotee. Hail to such affectionate towards the devotees.

While the Pandavas along with Draupadi were staying in the forest called *Kamyak*, one day it so happened that at the instance of Duryodhan, the great *Rishi* Durvasa accompanied by a host of his disciples numbering ten thousand approached the *Pandavas*. On purpose did Duryodhan send him to them, when having finished their meals all of the *Pandavas* were relaxing themselves. For the purpose of entertaining the guests properly, king Yudhishtir had obtained through solicitation of sun-god, such a magic pot that even scanty food cooked in it became inexhaustible, but the condition was that this magic power could remain effective only so long as Draupadi would not finish her meals. Yudhishtir invited him for meals along with the host of his disciples. Subsequently Durvasaji accompanied by all went to the bank of the Ganga for bathing and performing other daily rituals.

When Durvasaji went about a host of ten thousand disciples followed him and it seemed as if a whole university escorted him. All of them had of course been invited by Dharmaraj to have their meals and the *Rishi* had expressed his consent but nobody took notice of the fact that Draupadi had already finished her meal and so food could not be provided to them even through the effect of

the pot provided by sun-god, Draupadi was greatly worried. She thought to herself that if the *Rishi* returns unfed, he won't refrain from invoking a curse. He was known throughout the world for his wrathful nature. When Draupadi was unable to find a solution she remembered Lord Krishna who relieves His devotees from all fears, from the core of her heart and in order to relieve her from the present crisis prayed Him thus—

कृष्ण कृष्ण महाबाहो देवकीनन्दनाव्यय ॥
 वासुदेव जगन्नाथ प्रणतार्तिविनाशन ।
 विश्वात्मन् विश्वजनक विश्वहर्तः प्रभोऽव्यय ॥
 प्रपन्नपाल गोपाल प्रजापाल परात्पर ।
 आकूतीनां च चित्तीनां प्रवर्तक नतास्मि ते ॥
 वरेण्य वरदानन्त अगतीनां गतिर्भव ।
 पुराणपुरुष प्राणमनोवृत्त्याद्यगोचर ॥
 सर्वाध्यक्ष पराध्यक्ष त्वामहं शरणं गता ।
 पाहि मां कृपया देव शरणागतवत्सल ॥
 नीलोत्पलदलश्याम पद्मगर्भारुणेक्षण ।
 पीताम्बरपरीधान लसत्कौस्तुभभूषण ॥
 त्वमादिरन्तो भूतानां त्वमेव च परायणम् ।
 परात्परतरं ज्योतिर्विश्वात्मा सर्वतोमुखः ॥
 त्वामेवाहुः परं बीजं निधानं सर्वसम्पदाम् ।
 त्वया नाथेन देवेश सर्वापद्भ्यो भयं न हि ॥
 दुःशासनादहं पूर्वं सभायां मोचिता यथा ।
 तथैव संकटादस्मान्मामुद्धर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

(Mahabharat, Vana. 263.8-16)

“O Krishna, O mighty armed Shri Krishna, O son of Devaki, O imperishable Lord, O remover of troubles of

the grief-stricken people who lie prostrate at your revered feet, O Lord of the universe, You alone are the Supreme Soul pervading the entire universe. The creation and dissolution of the universe is but a playful act of your hand. O God, you are indestructible. O Gopal, the protector of those taking refuge in you. You are the saviour of the entire created beings—the most transcendental, Supreme Being. You are the motive force behind all mental propensities and the blissful state of the spirit. I make obeisance to Thee. O Infinite, worthy of adoration of all and bestower of boons, hasten to save those helpless devotees who are unable to find anyone but You to help them. O Eternal Being, the propensities of mind and vital powers miserably fail to make access to You. O Supreme Being, the passive witness of all, I surrender myself to you. O Lord! You who are affectionate to those taking refuge in you, be kind to save me from harm. O dark complexioned Lord, having bodily complexion like that of blue lotuses and eyes slightly reddish like the core of lotuses. O Krishna adorned with gem called Kaustubha and apparelled in yellow garment, you are the most transcendental, effulgent, all pervading and the Over-soul. Men endowed with knowledge call You alone the eternal seed of the entire creation and the perennial source of all the divine attributes. So long as you are there to protect me, there can be no cause of fear even if all the calamities befall me. Just as you saved me on a previous occasion in the assembly from the clutches of Duhshasan so also be kind enough now to deliver us out

of the present predicament.”

The inner self of everyone verily stands revealed to Shri Krishna. He arrived there without any loss of time. It seemed as if Draupadi was vivified at the sight of Him—as if a drowning man had caught at a straw. Draupadi summarily related to Him the whole matter. Displaying His impatience Shri Krishna said—“We shall talk about other matters afterwards. First let me have something to eat. I am extremely hungry. You can hardly imagine what a long distance I had to cover in arriving here and how desperately exhausted I am.” Draupadi was mortified with shame. She stammered out—“My Lord, I have just finished my meal. Little is left in that cooking pot now.” “Let me atleast have a glance at the cooking pot” said Shri Krishna. Krishna (Draupadi) brought out the pot. When Shri Krishna took up the pot and examined it, he found a piece of leafy vegetable sticking at its neck. Putting the same into His mouth He said—“Let the Lord of the entire universe and the enjoyer of all sacrifices be appeased with this piece of leafy vegetable. Subsequently he said to Sahadev—“Brother, now go to fetch the sages to have their meals. When Sahadev reached the bank of the river Ganga he found none of them there. What had exactly happened was that while Shri Krishna was putting the leafy vegetable into His mouth and pronouncing His resolve, the great sages standing in the water were sanctifying themselves. All of a sudden such a feeling arose in their mind that their bellies were full upto the neck with victual. They looked at each

other as if to ask—"What can we possibly eat there at the cottage of the *Pandavas*? Durvasa saw wisdom in escaping away from there unnoticed for, he knew it well that the *Pandavas* were devotees of God and ever since the untoward happenings that took place at the house of Ambarisha, he had begun to entertain great fright for the Lord's devotees. Eventually all of them fled away from there. Sahadev received the information of their escapade from the ascetics who dwelt there and after returning from there he narrated the matter to Dharmaraj. Thus, through Draupadi's devotion to Shri Krishna, an imminent danger to the *Pandavas* was averted. Through His arrival Shri Krishna saved them from the wrath of Durvasa and thus he displayed His affectionateness to those who make self-surrender to Him.

Once Shri Krishna along with Satyabhama, the revered lady, paid a visit to the *Pandavas* in the forest. During her conversation with Draupadi, Satyabhama said to her—"Sister, I dare ask you a question. I find that your gallant and mighty husbands are always reconciled to you. What is the reason behind it? Are you in the know of some magic formula or medicine or have you won over their hearts through *Japa*, penance, fasting, your learning, through offering oblations to the fire? Could you suggest some device to me as well through which I can win over the heart of Shyamasundar? Draupadi, the revered lady, said—"Sister, I wonder why in spite of being the chief queen and wise beloved wife of Shyamasundar, you speak like

that. The ladies who are pious and exclusively devoted to their husbands refrain from such magic formulae in the same way as one keeps away from snakes and scorpions. Can one's husband be ever subjugated through magic formulae? Only the ignorant and wretch ladies resort to such methods in order to entice their husbands. By doing so they not only harm themselves but also harm their husbands. One should always keep oneself aloof from such women."

Subsequently she explained to her how she conducted herself in order to seek the pleasure of her husbands. Giving up the sense of self-esteem, lust and anger I with due care render service to all the *Pandavas* and the womenfolk of their family. I guard myself against spite and keeping my mind under control I surrender myself to the will of my husbands only with a view to serve them. I refrain from using bitter words. I do not stand in an uncivil manner. I do not cast a glance at evil things nor do I ever sit at an undesirable place, avoid the least nearness to those having evil character. I follow their meaningful hint. But for the *Pandavas* I cherish for none else—be he a celestial being, a man, a demigod, young, affluent or handsome. I take food only after feeding my husbands, take bath only after they have taken theirs and sit down only after they take their seats. Whenever my husbands return home I stand up to show my respect and offer them seat and water. I scour and clean well all the utensils, prepare sweet dishes, offer meals on time and

remain active all the time. I pay heed to the preservation of grains in the house and keep my house clean by sweeping and dusting it. I do not scorn at anyone during conversation with him and avoid the least contact with women of undesirable character and shaking off sloth ever try to conduct myself in a way pleasing to my husbands. I avoid frequently standing at the gate nor do I stay longer at an open place or a place where rubbish is heaped. I always practise truthfulness in speech and devote myself to the service of my husbands. I don't like at all to live all alone without my husbands. When my husbands goes away from home on account of some domestic piece of work I stop the use of flowers and sandal-paste and spend my time in observing religious rites and keeping fast. I abstain from using such things as are not eaten, drunk or used by my husbands. I totally observe the injunctions of the scriptures prescribed for the ladies. I always try to bedeck myself with the clothes and cosmetics that are available and take precaution only to do that which is agreeable to my husbands.

I observe each and every household duty instructed to me by my revered mother-in-law. I virtually observe with due care day and night all the duties prescribed for me relating to the giving away of charities, offering worship and oblations to the manes, preparing of sweet dishes on festive occasions and the extending of warm welcome to the respectable persons etc. At all times I adhere to modest behaviour and regulated life. In my opinion the perpetual

duty of women is only to remain under the control of their husbands, for, they are verily their deities. I never cherish a life better than those of my husbands, never eat better food, never put on better clothes and ornaments than those worn by my husbands, never enter into conflict with my revered mother-in-law and ever exercise self-control. I, as a rule, get up earlier than my husbands and remain dedicated to the service of my elders. I regularly serve my mother-in-law by providing her food, water and clothes. In respect of garments, ornaments and food etc., I never aspire for anything special and different from my mother-in-law. Formerly king Yudhishtir had as many maid servants as ten thousand and I literally knew their names, features and clothes etc., and I also took due notice of what they did and what they did not. At the time when staying at Indraprastha, king Yudhishtir carried on his administrative work, one lakh horses and equal number of elephants were moving along with him. The work of counting them and the managing of their affairs was conducted by none else but me and it was I who had to pay heed to their requirements. Again it was I who looked after the work of all the servants including the milkmen and shepherds employed in the inner apartment.

I unassisted by anyone else, would maintain the accounts of the king's income, expenditure and savings. Shifting the entire household duties on my shoulders, the *Pandavas* dedicated themselves to the offering of worship and greeting those who visited the house or departed from

it. And I having given up all comforts, looked after them. I alone knew about the inexhaustible treasure that belonged to them. Undergoing the pain of hunger and thirst I dedicated myself day and night to the service of the *Pandavas*. Those days, days and nights had lost their distinction for me. I would be the first to rise and the last to go to bed. O Satyabhama, this is the mode I know of, for seeking conciliation with one's husband. We should take a lesson from the life of Draupadi as to how an ideal house-wife should conduct herself.

Wonderful blending of effulgence befitting of Kshtriya and forgiveness of devotees was in the character of Devi Draupadi. She was very intelligent and endowed with learning. Extraordinary was her sense of selfless sacrifice. Her supreme faithfulness to her husbands was acknowledged by one and all. Catching hold of her hair when wicked Duhshasan dragged her to the assembly hall, she tried to intimidate him by saying that he would become the subject of her husband's wrath, rebuked the courtiers and admonished the respectable elderly persons like Drona, Bhishm and Vidura for remaining passive onlookers. She bowled at them and appealed to them in the name of justice and asked them in the name of *Dharm* if king Yudhishtir had any right to put her at stake after he had lost his own self at the stake. All the courtiers were rendered speechless. None dared answer Draupadi's question. At last rose Vikarna, the brother of Duryodhan, from his seat and made an appeal to everyone to answer Draupadi's question and entreated

them to break silence. He expressed his own view- point saying that firstly, Draupadi was verily the wife of all the five brothers, hence Yudhishtir had not the sole right to put Draupadi at stake. Secondly, he put Draupadi at stake after he had lost his own self at the stake and therefore, it should be regarded as an improper action done by him. On hearing the view-point of Vikarna, Vidura seconded it and some other courtiers praised him. But Karna rebuked him and made him sit down. In spite of being humiliated and dragged in such a way to the assembly hall packed to the capacity, Draupadi did gain a moral victory. Her wit was predominant. Nobody dared oppose her views. At last at the suggestion of Vidura, Dhritrashtra scolded Duryodhan and in order to please her, advised Draupadi to ask for a boon. Draupadi merely expressed the desire that her five husbands should be freed from slavery. Dhritrashtra lovingly insisted her to ask for something more. Whatever Draupadi said in reply at that time, was entirely befitting a woman like Draupadi alone. What she said, clearly shows her greedlessness and love of *Dharm*. She said, Sire, it is not proper to entertain much greed. Besides, I don't crave at all for anything else. My husbands themselves are capable enough. Now as they stand free from servility they will be in a position to manage everything themselves. Thus, through her wit and chastity she could be able to secure freedom for her husbands from servility.

Draupadi could never quite dismiss from her mind the fact that she was dragged to the assembly hall crowded

with people by wicked Duhshasan by catching her same long and black hair which had of late been drenched with holy water sanctified through the recitation of *Mantras* at the time of taking bath in Rajasuya sacrifice. The fire of that unprecedented humiliation kept burning at her heart all the time. That was why whenever the proposal for making peace with the *Kauravas* came to her knowledge, she did nothing but oppose it and ever reminding them of the humiliation meted out to her by the *Kauravas* and always instigated her husbands to fight. At last when it was finally decided ultimately to make an effort to bring the *Kauravas* round and consequently when Lord Shri Krishna was ready to proceed towards Hastinapur with peace proposal from the side of the *Pandavas* even, at that moment she could not dismiss from her mind the incident and taking her long hair into her hand she said to Shri Krishna—"O Shri Krishna, it is good that you are going there for a peace accord. But do not fail to keep in view my hair." She went on to say—"It matters little if the *Pandavas* do not cherish the desire to fight; my old father accompanied by his gallant sons shall combat with the *Kauravas* and my five sons including Abhimanyu shall wage war against them."

In the Kamyak forest when Jayadratha was trying to take Draupadi away by force, she pushed him so hard that he fell down on the ground like a cut down tree. But instantly he stood erect and forcibly dragging her into the chariot started from there. Later on, when Bhima and Arjun

seized and brought him home and thrashed him soundly, she, out of mercy, made him set at liberty. Thus we see that Draupadi not only became cross but also possessed a sense of forgiveness. The sublimity of her chaste life was unique. Whoever tried to molest or seduce her, was deprived of his life. Duryodhan, Duhshasan, Karna, Jayadratha, Kichak and others had to meet such a fate. Who should not be doomed by the heart-rending shrieks of a chaste woman undergoing tortures? The root cause of the extermination of the *Kauravas* in the battle of *Mahabharat* was undoubtedly the humiliation of Draupadi who was faithfully devoted to her husbands.

Gandhari—Paragon of Chastity

Gandhari occupies a high place among the chaste ladies of the world. She was the daughter of Subala, the king of Gandhar and sister of Shakuni. When she was yet a virgin, she obtained through inordinate adoration of Lord Shankar the boon of having one hundred sons. Ever since she came to know that she was going to be married to Dhritrashtra who was blind, she bandaged both of her eyes. She thought to herself that since her husband was not blessed with eyesight, she could not arrogate to herself the right of enjoying the sights of the world. From that day till the very end of her life she stuck to her firm resolve. Such an example of denying oneself sense enjoyments for the sake of husband, can hardly be found in the history of the world. Such a self-denial and dispassion of her was marvellous and something rare for the world. She was always submissive to her husband. Soon after coming to her father-in-law's house, through her character and virtues, she cast a spell on her husband and all the members of his family. Blessed be one's love for one's husband.

Gandhari, the revered lady, was as intrepid and justice-loving as she was exclusively devoted to her husband. She always stood for truth, ethical values and *Dharm* and would never side with injustice. She entertained in her heart much grief for the ill-treatment accorded to Draupadi by her own sons in the crowded assembly hall. She was not happy

with her sons over the matter. She became much grieved when her husband, king Dhritrashtra, induced by his sons summoned the *Pandavas* for the second time to play the game of dice, protesting against gambling she said to her revered husband—My Lord, no sooner did Duryodhan see the light of the day than he started crying and howling like a jackal that was why profoundly learned Vidurji had instantaneously suggested to give up such a son. Whenever I am reminded of that prediction, I assume he shall prove himself to be the cause of the extirpation of the lineage of the *Kurus*. Therefore, my most respected husband, do not hurl others into misfortunes on account of your own fault. Do not say ditto to what these impudent stupid people say. Do not make yourself the cause of the utter destruction of this lineage of ours. Do not pull down a bridge which is intact. The fire that lies extinguished shall blaze up again. The *Pandavas* are calm and are free from malice and animosity. It won't be proper to arouse their anger at this moment. Aware though you are of all these things, I take an opportunity to remind you. An ill-witted person remains unaffected by the injunctions of the scriptures. It is improper that in spite of your old age, you behave like a child. At present you must not disown the *Pandavas* who are sons to you. Take care that being aggrieved, they may not seek separation from you. It is but proper to abandon Duryodhan who is a slur upon the family. This is the evil consequence of disregarding due to infatuation, the advice given at that time by Vidurji. Keep your reasoning power alive through unperturbedness, righteousness and by acting upon the

wholesome advice of your ministers. Abstain from the negligence of duty. Acting without forethoughts will prove to be of great trouble to you. Kingly prosperity possessed by a wretch person causes his doom. These words of Gandhari abundantly reflect her righteousness, moral values and impartiality. She would caution Duryodhan against his evil doings and rebuke him for his overbearance and draw before him horrible pictures of terrible future consequences of his immoral activities. But his doom was looming large over his head which would not let him heed these salutary advices aiming at his own well-being.

When Lord Krishna himself arrived at Hastinapur as the envoy of *Pandavas* and he too failed in His attempt to persuade Duryodhan, Dhritrashtra called Gandhari to his presence and said to her—"Now it is time for you to bring your son round. He pays heed to none of us." Hearing these words Gandhari said—"O King, you are overwhelmed by infatuation for your son. So (in this regard) you are to be held mainly responsible for the fault. Knowing the fact that Duryodhan is a great sinner, you have hitherto, been guided by his wits. Duryodhan is fully enmeshed by lust, anger and greed. You will not be able to even by the use of force, keep himself away from this path. Without considering the pros and cons you handed over the reigns of administration of the state in the hands of your son who is villaineous, ignorant, ill-companioned and greedy and now you are experiencing its evil consequences. You have constantly been ignoring the rift that is cropping up in your own family. By such an act of yours, you are making

yourself ridiculous in the eyes of the *Pandavas*. Will any wise man ever resort to punishment to his own kith and kin in case a catastrophe could be averted through persuasion and allurements?" How frank, unbiased, beneficent, moral, ethical and sincere this assertion of Gandhari was!

After that she called for her son and started exhorting him. She spoke thus—"Dear son, listen to what I say. Act upon the advice given to you by your father, Bhishmji, Dronacharya, Kripacharya and Vidurji. If you settle your dispute with the *Pandavas*, take it for granted, that you will hereby render a great service to the grand father Bhishm, your father, me and all your well-wishers, such as Dronacharya and others as well. The attaining of kingship, safeguarding it and the enjoying of kingly glory—all are beyond human control. Only the man who has control over his senses, can defend his kingdom. Lust and greed undoubtedly deprive one of one's wealth. The entire world can be conquered through the conquest of these two enemies. Just as an uncontrollable horse causes the death of his unwise charioteer on the way, so also the unsubdued senses are cause enough for bringing about the doom of a human being. Thus prosperity stays longer with one who exercises control over his senses and who undertakes all of his activities after fore-thought. Dear son, whatever advice has been given to you by grand father Bhishm and your preceptor Dronacharya is quite sound. In fact Shri Krishna and Arjun cannot be overcome by anybody. So you are advised to take refuge in Shri Krishna and His pleasure will ensure the well-being of both sides. Dear child, battling does not ensure one's well-being since it does

not secure *Dharm* or material prosperity; it can't provide us happiness. If you as well as ministers want to enjoy the happiness of kingship, you must give the *Pandavas* their due share. The act of banishing the *Pandavas* for thirteen years is another big crime done to them. Now alleviate the crime by making peace with them. O dear one, in this world none can become wealthy through greed. So give up your greed and settle the matter with the *Pandavas*. How wholesome and heart-touching exhortation it was! It reveals the fact that Gandhari was wise and she also knew the glory of Shri Krishna and Arjun.

These noble teachings of Gandhari had no effect on wicked Duryodhan. He did not give up his obstinacy. The result was that preparations for war began on both sides and killing and fighting took place in the battlefield of Kurukshetra continuously for eighteen days. During the period of war, Duryodhan would pray her everyday saying—"Mother, I am going to have a terse fight with my enemies. Be good enough to bless me so that I may become victorious. Gandhari possessed the sublimity of the lady who looks upon her husband as her deity and if she at all blessed her son, her words would not have become futile. But how could she dare bless him? She knew well that Duryodhan was an oppressor and kingly glory can never stay with a tyrant. That was why everytime he approached her, she would repeat these words—My son, where there is *Dharm* there is victory. If you desire to become victorious do resort to *Dharm* and refrain from what is unrighteous." She never nursed any partiality for Duryodhan. But when the news came to her ears that all


of her hundred sons were killed, her overwhelming grief aroused her wrath and she intended to invoke curse on the *Pandavas*. Lord Vedvyas could verily know what was at other's heart. When Vedvyas came to know about her intention, he approached her and offered her consolation and restrained her from her evil desire. The *Pandavas* too were present there at the time. Sensing the agitation at her heart Yudhishtir approached her and reproaching his ownself the moment he tried to fall at her feet, Gandhari's wrathful glance penetrated through the bandage and fell on the nails of king Yudhishtir. It caused at once his lovely reddish nails turn black. Noticing this, Arjun hid himself behind Krishna, his brothers too began to hide themselves here and there out of fright. Noticing them in such a hesitant mood, Gandhari's temper cooled down and she consoled the *Pandavas* like a mother. The above mentioned incident reveals to us the matchless sublimity Gandhari was endowed with by virtue of her single-minded devotion to her husband. Finally Shri Krishna had to become the victim of her wrath. To put it in other words, it was none else but indweller Shri Krishna who saved the *Pandavas* from her wrath by changing her mind and making Himself the object of her fury and curse. When revered Gandhari went to Kurukshetra and looked at the heart-rending scenes of the battlefield, she could not help control her sorrow. She became wrathful and spoke to Shri Krishna thus—"O Krishna, the *Pandavas* and the Kauravas have surely been doomed on account of their hostility. But how it is that in spite of your capabilities you did not care for the interest of your kith and kin. You had a number of servants and

a large army as well. You could, if you would prevail on both of them and could bring them round through your skill of speech but knowingly you did not mind the destruction of the *Kauravas*. So you must now bear the consequence of your neglect. On the score of merits that I have earned through the service of my husband, I hereby curse you that as you wilfully neglected the *Pandavas* and the *Kauravas* fighting with one another so also you shall be responsible for the killing of your own kith and kin and you yourself shall be killed with none nearby to protect you. Just as these ladies belonging to the race of Bharat are piteously lamenting, so also shall the ladies of your family weep and wail the death of their friends and relatives.”

Hearing these harsh words of Gandhari large-hearted Shri Krishna smiled and said—“I was aware of the fact that things would take such a course. By invoking the curse you have simply foretold what was already destined to happen. Undoubtedly the extermination of *Vrishni* race will take place on account of divine wrath. Its extermination will be caused by none else but me. Far less to speak of men, even the gods and the demons are not capable of bringing about its extermination. So the men belonging to the *Yadu*-race shall cause their own destruction through mutual conflicts.

After the coronation of Yudhishtir, the revered Gandhari stayed with him for some time but subsequently went to the forest along with her husband and having lived there the life of an ascetic, and like ascetics burnt herself alive along with her husband in the forest-fire and attained the

realms of Kuber along with her husband. Thus, Gandhari who was exclusively devoted to her husband having served her husband in the world, got an opportunity to live in close proximity to and served her husband which is the ultimate object of a lady exclusively devoted to her husband. Every lady exclusively devoted to her husband should reflect on the character of Gandhari and should take lesson from it.




Conclusion

Truth and justice will ultimately bear the auspicious fruit. Having appeared at rigorous test, Sita established the moral ideal for the women that she, who even in the misery, would lead a virtuous life like Sita, her moral performance will shine forever in the world. Sita's devotion to her husband, Sita's innocent affectionate love for Bharat, Lakshman and Satrughna, devoted service to her mother-in-laws, her affectionate treatment to the attendants, an ideal attachment with all at her paternal place or at the place of the in-laws, her effort to please and pay due regard to all, fondly service of the sages, motherhood of her gallant sons-Lava-Kush, her dexterity to impart teaching to them, courage, patience, penance, gallance and ideal moral attitude etc., is always worth emulating. All our mothers and sisters who follow Sita's character, having given up the heedlessness infatuation and attachment, there is not the least doubt in their own salvation but they can redeem their sons and husbands also. Nothing more to say, rather then, whosoever is fortunate to be bestowed upon the kind favour of such pious women, also be redeemed. Such a virtuous woman supremely devoted to her husband, is worth seeing and deserves to be worshipped. Not only by man but even by the gods also she is adorable and by her character, she is capable to sanctify all the three worlds.

Though, Sitaji was the true manifestation of Bhagawati and Shakti of the Almighty God, yet all the women can follow and adopt all the ideal and noble deeds of her character done in the interest of the human well-being in the

manly world for the good and moral lessons to the world merely, there was the incarnation of Sita-Ram. So and thus, their characters and teachings were not unworldly but so practical that we can avail the benefit by practising them in our life. Such men and women who want to evade of their duty supposing that Sita-Ram were not the mortal mankind but the manifestation of the Almighty God and the goddess Shakti, and hence, it is not possible for us to follow their ideals, they are coward and not devotee, who consider Shri Ram, the manifestation of God only in words merely to say. The true devotees should emulate the character of Sita-Ram in true spirit.



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